

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP
September 23, 2010
Environmental Defense Center Conference Room,
906 Garden Street, Santa Barbara

Present: Linda Krop (Environmental Defense Center), Greg Helms (The Ocean Conservancy), Kristi Birney Rieman (Environmental Defense Center), Jackie Dragon (Pacific Environment), Debra Herring, Vic Cox, Sarah Green (Bren School), Michael Gould, Lauren Garske (UC Davis), Bud Bottoms

CINMS Staff: Michael Murray

I. INTRODUCTION

Attendees introduced themselves.

II. WHALES AND SHIPPING

- A. PARS: A representative of the USCG will make a presentation at the SAC meeting tomorrow. He will summarize comments received thus far and describe the upcoming workshops. The USCG is interested in using whale and AIS data from the CINMS.
- B. Bren School group project: Sarah Green discussed the group project. Chris Costello is the primary faculty advisor, and the CINMS and NMFS are the clients. The main objectives of the project are to (1) provide an economic analysis, and (2) analyze the risks associated with various management options. They will use AIS data to develop their analyses. They are also interested in trying to analyze means for detecting ship strikes. Their proposal is available on the Bren School website. The report will be completed in February 2011.
- C. AIS data: CINMS staff has the capacity to receive and process AIS data. The recent AIS analysis will be presented at the SAC meeting.
- D. Recent whale deaths: (a) a blue whale washed up near Pt. Bennett on San Miguel Island; efforts are underway to access the whale and commence assessment; (b) a minke whale came in on the bow of a ship at Oakland; and (c) a whale washed up on Ocean Beach in SF. Investigations regarding causes of death are underway. We discussed the desire to have Michele Berman and Paul Collins from the SBMNH provide a follow-up report regarding the blue whale to the SAC.
- E. Jackie reported that a CBNMS/GFNMS Working Group is being formed to address shipping issues.
- F. Mike Murray brought a publication from ECM Maritime Services LLS,

which includes an article regarding “Whale Advisory Zone for Santa Barbara Channel Area.” Linda also noted that the USCG sent a notice to mariners reminding them that the only IMO-approved traffic lanes are within the Channel.

III. OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

- A. West Coast Task Force: the respective staff members of the Task Force are developing draft activities to match the strategies of Research, Monitoring, Education & Outreach, Resource Protection, Influencing National and International Policy, Demonstrating Leadership by Reducing Carbon Emissions, and Coordinating with other Organizations on Funding Opportunities. In addition, Linda conducted outreach to the five west coast SACs. She relayed the responses she has received thus far, pertaining to (1) the relationship between ocean acidification and oxygen depletion zones, and (2) a July 2010 workshop in Puget Sound.
- B. The Sanctuary Education Team is hosting a training workshop for educators, the Naturalist Corps and docents on October 7 and 23. Linda will email the information to the CWG.
- C. Vic mentioned an article from Frontiersman that discusses that commercial and recreational fishers agree on the threats posed by ocean acidification. Linda will distribute the article to the CWG.

IV. MLPA/MARINE RESERVES

- A. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the South Coast MPAs has been released; comments are due October 4. Some interested parties have requested an extension. The Fish & Game Commission will consider this request at a hearing near Sacramento on September 29.
- B. The LA Sanitation Districts have raised concerns about the Palos Verdes MPAs.
- C. The Fish & Game Commission will hold a hearing on the DEIR October 20-21 and on the FEIR and project December 15-16.

V. RIGS TO REEFS

- A. AB 2503 has passed the State Legislature, and is awaiting action by the Governor. Linda explained the provisions in the bill, and pointed out the many uncertainties (e.g., whether fishing will be allowed at a decommissioned platform, how platforms will function when the top 85 feet are removed). The legislation and the proponents cite the new Ocean Science Trust report, which itself identifies numerous “data gaps” in addressing ecological and economic issues.

VI. OTHER ISSUES

- A. NMSA Reauthorization: no new news.
- B. Water Quality Characterization Report: SB Channelkeeper will present their report at the SAC meeting. The CWG expressed an interest in learning how the Report will be used by the CINMS.
- C. Viewing Guidelines: Debra distributed a NOAA news release from the Southwest Region providing guidelines for viewing blue whales and other marine mammals, and informing the public about the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- D. California and World Ocean Conference: several CWG members attended the conference and commented on how informative and relevant the conference was. The conference included panels about ocean acidification, climate change, marine spatial planning, marine protected areas, ocean governance, rigs to reefs, sustainable seafood, and marine debris. Sarah stated that she will provide summaries of the panels she attended.
- E. Sea Otters: Linda will circulate an article about a UC Santa Cruz study linking sea otter deaths along the California central coast to a freshwater toxin.
- F. Coastal Cleanup Day is September 25. The CINMS and CINP will co-sponsor cleanup efforts at Emma Wood State Beach in Ventura County and at Santa Claus Lane and Gaviota State Beaches in Santa Barbara County.